

unchained melody

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unchained melody

by [astronomika](#)

Summary

dream is getting used to the afterlife, but after unintentionally seeing into the world of the living and witnessing a plot to hurt george davidson, he runs to a phony medium for help into relaying the warning and protecting his former lover from harm.

Notes

welcome back. if you have not yet recovered from the first book, i do apologize.

unlike the au, this IS canon. it is the official sequel of the first book.

inspired by the movie Ghost.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

vision

Clay Soot had died. He had been dead for four months.

So it was safe to say he didn't have a heartbeat.

But he sure did feel like he had a heart.

He couldn't feel pain, at least not physically anymore.

But every now and then, all he got was a twang of hurt. More often than not, his heart would break, and he knew why.

Every time the people he loved broke down or cried for him, he'd feel it.

That's all Clay got. A small feeling.

He did not get a doorway into their world to hug them and tell them it was going to be okay. He could not watch them and see when, where, and why someone had shed a tear for him. All he got was a small feeling of despair.

He thought of his family, and he knew that even if he couldn't see them, that it was them that had cried for him. He still had the ability to cry, so he did. He cried into his hands. He wanted to cry enough for the people he loved to feel it in their world, to feel it in their hearts that he knows they think of him.

The first time he felt this was two days after his death. He had been sitting in an "afterlife replica" of Wilbur's house in Florida, when suddenly he got a heavy indescribable feeling in his chest. He could not see living people, nor could he hear them, but what he felt seemed connected to them.

Sapnap had explained to him that the dead can feel the ache of the living that mourn them. He too had felt a lot of it days after he died, but at some point it had toned down, indicating they had slowly moved on.

Dream never found out who was mourning him in Wilbur's house, which bothered him a lot. He knew his family was in grief and he couldn't do anything about it.

Unbeknownst to Dream, the person that was mourning him was Tommy. That day was when Wilbur had to tell him that his grandpa would not come back.

They were alive, and are considered the lucky ones, but being dead was no better. He left them. That's the one thing he's done that he can't forgive himself for. Leaving them.

The afterlife was interesting to say the least. For one, the world was what he thought was too bright. It was a brighter, more white replica of the real world. It looked heavenly, but at some point the look of it all became exhausting.

Another interesting thing was that he woke up in the afterlife with his young body. He was never told the age of the form he took, but he assumed it was him in his 20's. He had missed his agility, his fresh blond hair, and overall the feeling of youth, so having this form was exciting for him.

Sometimes he'd walk over to the replica of George Davidson's house, which was also his old childhood home. It was always empty, except for the telephone with the broken cord sitting in the

upstairs room and the flowers in the front yard.

Sapnap told him that the only objects that are visible to ghosts in the replicas of the world are the ones that were most important to them during their life. It was a beautiful way to see the world, as it reminded them how much they had loved during life, but also broke him knowing he had left George so abruptly and heartbroken.

Now, Dream had been sitting cross legged in Wilbur's home, which was also empty except for a few objects like his old guitar that he had passed down to Wilbur, Dave's first baseball trophy, and Tommy's karate belt.

He had heard a scuffle from the front door, so he stood up and walk toward it. Once he got there, he was face to face with Sapnap, who's eyes had widened and looked in shock.

"Nick?" Dream tried to calm his friend, "Are you alright?"

Sapnap was still silent, staring off into space as if he hadn't heard Dream speak to him. Dream led him to the floor to sit down, and he unknowingly followed.

"Sapnap," Dream repeated, "what's wrong with you?" He asked once they had both sat down.

"Darryl." Was all Sapnap said, as his leg shook repeatedly and rapidly.

Dream raised his eyebrows, "Darryl? What about Darryl?"

Sapnap finally looked Dream in the eye, "I saw him." Once he said that, Dream had felt an ache in his chest, or at least the closest thing to an ache someone could get when they're dead.

Dream knew that if Sapnap saw Darryl, it had meant he died. The only people ghosts could see, were other ghosts. He could not believe that one of their closest friends had joined them so early on in his life. "How did he die?" Dream asked.

Dream waited for an answer, but instead Sapnap started shaking his head rapidly, "He's not dead."

"How did you see him, then?" Dream asked in utter confusion.

Sapnap sighed, "I dropped by his house and was thinking a lot about those days when we'd babysit his kids and teach them how to play manhunt. In the woods, remember that?"

Dream smiled and nodded, and Sapnap continued.

"I was thinking about how much I missed that. How much I missed being able to run around and be so- so-" Sapnap struggled with his words.

"Alive." Dream had finished for him, and Sapnap nodded with a bittersweet look on his face.

"I thought about it so hard. How if I could have one day to go back, it'd be to do that kind of stuff again." He rambled, "And when I opened my eyes, his house was filled with furniture. Everything that was in his house in the living world. None of it is important to me, so I couldn't understand why I could see it."

Dream, intrigued, urged his friend to go on.

"Then I saw him." He looked Dream in the eye, "He was holding his grandson and watching

television. I knew it was real, Dream. I saw into the living world."

Naturally a skeptic, Dream tried considering other things. One was that ghosts tended to hallucinate a lot about the living world when they missed it so much, but they couldn't get much out of it. Another was that Sapnap had been the one of them both to always believe the craziest things.

Sapnap had tried convincing him for the next thirty minutes, insisting what he saw had been real.

"WAIT." Sapnap had yelled suddenly, making Dream flinch, "Oops, sorry."

"What is it?" Dream had asked.

"I know why I'm not hallucinating." A smile started to form on his face, and he had started to get jittery and excited, clutching Dream's arm.

Dream raised a brow, "Alright... why?"

"Ghosts only hallucinate about the things they have seen or felt when they were living." Sapnap began. "I saw Darryl's grandson."

"Okay... and?" Dream awaited elaboration.

"Dream." Sapnap said, "I died before I could meet his grandson."

a lesson

Armed with the knowledge that the possibility of entering the world of the living was real, Dream only had one thing at the top of his priorities.

"Teach me."

Sapnap turned to him, "*Teach you?*" He sputtered, "Dream, I don't even know how I did it. I'm sorry if I got your hopes up." He said as he watched his friend's face fall. "Oh no. I didn't mean it in a-"

"I know." Dream sighed, looking over at his old guitar which now belonged to Wilbur and ran his hand across it, "It's just been a long time."

Sapnap nodded in understanding, "Time goes by slowly here, I know. I've been here longer."

There were no clocks or calendars, so it was up to them to rely on their own memory to estimate what the date was. Time was non-existent, but they held on to the hope that they still had a sense of when it was.

He remembered the lyrics he had sung to George once over the phone,

"and time goes by so slowly, and time can do so much."

Sapnap noticed his friend falling into deep thought, and immediately knew it was about George. He had put his hand on Dream's shoulder and took a deep breath, "The last thing I remembered before I saw Darryl was thinking of the memories I made with him. Then when I opened my eyes I saw him."

Dream looked up, "Oh." He said, "It must have been a hallucination, then."

Sapnap's brow furrowed, "Why would you say that? I thought you believed me now."

"Because," Dream explained, "all I ever do is think of the memories I made. All I ever do is think. It should have happened to me already at this point but it hasn't."

Sapnap tried to assure his friend, "Well then maybe I'm wrong. Maybe that wasn't the reason I was able to get in his world."

"Then what would the reason be?" Dream asked.

"Depends." Sapnap said, "Who do you want to see first?"

They were now standing in the upstairs bedroom of his childhood house. In front of an old telephone.

"You're choosing to see *Wrong Number* over your own family?" Sapnap asked in disbelief, gesturing to the old house.

Dream shook his head, "Most of my memories are here. From when I was a kid, to when I brought Wilbur and Dave here to see my childhood house, and when I accidentally locked Drista in the car with a spider in the driveway. I have more memories here than just George."

Sapnap nodded in understanding slowly, "Okay. Well, go."

"Go?" Dream said sassily, "What do I even do?"

Sapnap gestured wildly, "Well I don't know. Do your 'trying to see into the living world' thing."

"Wh- How?"

"I don't know, Clay." He said in an obnoxious tone, "I'm not the all knowing king of the ghosts."

"You're the one that was able to do it." Dream put his hand on Sapnap's shoulders and shook him crazily, "Please?"

"Such a wild child." Sapnap sighed, "Just think of the memories I guess."

"Think of the memories I guess." Dream mocked, and Sapnap rolled his eyes with a smile.

"You know," Sapnap began, "I thought you'd die and we'd have this cute reunion but here we are. You're still such a sassy pissbaby." He said jokingly, and Dream shook his head with a laugh.

Dream closed his eyes and started thinking. He thought hard about all the memories that were made in the house. From getting into fights with his sisters, to bringing Sapnap in for the first time, breaking his window with a baseball.

He opened his eyes and expected to see something real, but instead was face to face with Sapnap.

"Hey, mamas." He smirked, and Dream pushed him away.

"I hate you. Get away, let me think." Dream scolded while Sapnap was on the floor laughing himself off.

"Okay. Sorry, sorry." Sapnap apologized but was still grinning widely.

Dream continued his thinking, working his way up every year he had lived in that house. He thought of everything from the smallest events like his birthday parties, to when his father finally was kicked out of the house.

He opened his eyes but saw nothing. All he saw was Sapnap holding something invisible in the corner.

"Sap," He called, and Sapnap turned to him, "What are you holding?"

"It's Patches' stuffed rat toy." Sapnap said, "You probably can't see it since it's not important to you."

Dream looked at him skeptically, "And why is Patches' toy important to you?"

Sapnap smiled, "She used to hate me, but when I got her this toy she started trusting me and played with me."

Dream smiled, and added Patches to his list of things to think about.

He tried for almost half an hour but it donned no results. Sapnap said they should call it a night (even though there was no night in the afterlife), and Dream agreed.

Sapnap went home, but Dream stayed in the bedroom of the house. He stared at the faint remains

of the flowery wallpaper, and the barely visible hand prints that were painted on it. He wished he would have explained and been less vague to George before he had passed away.

He put his hand on the hand print and closed his eyes. He would go back just to talk to George on last time.

Dream opened his eyes and suddenly the white glow of the afterlife had turned normal. The colors were vibrant again, something he had not seen since he was alive. The house was empty of people, but all the furniture and objects were in place.

Dream had done it. He started laughing to himself, he had done it.

He looked around the house but it was vacant. George must have not been home, and that killed him (well, killed him as much as an already dead person could be killed). He wanted to see George.

On the bedside table was a photo frame that was facing backwards, away from the bed. He tried to grab it and turn it over, but his hand went right through it. He then tried to maneuver himself in the corner to get a look at what the photo was, but he couldn't

"So I can put my hand through things, but I can't walk through walls. Ghost logic is so stupid." He said to himself.

He walked around the house, going downstairs and seeing The Birth of Venus painting still hanging up on the wall, his mother's favorite painting. He smiled as he saw a lot of stuff scattered in the kitchen. He remembered George saying he could be very unorganized.

This was his first time seeing the house when George lived there. This was where those phone calls that made him fall for him had taken place.

He reminisced for a while, but heard voices coming through the door. He rushed to it, thinking George and a friend might have come back home. He walked excitedly but saw no one there.

He turned and saw shadows of legs walking toward the house, accompanied by muffled sounds. He followed the noise, and saw two figures. Two figures that were blacked out and unrecognizable.

"How do you even know it's here?" One voice asked

"Boss said it was here." The other responded nastily, "Now stop asking questions."

They tried walking into the door but triggered a loud alarm. The security system had notified the house that a warning had been sent to George's phone about an unknown entity in his house.

That's when Dream knew that these people weren't good.

One of the figures tried bashing the alarm with his fist, but it didn't go silent.

They instead made over to their van parked outside, trying to start the engine but ultimately failing. Dream had never seen robbers with such bad luck. He couldn't do anything, but hoped that they would give up and drive away.

He was also curious as to what they were looking for.

The driver was punching the wheel of the car, telling it to start, but it wouldn't budge.

"This is what we get for going with your idea, Ranboo." The driver had said, still parked in George's driveway while the house alarm blared.

"I don't want to hurt anyone, Phil." The other, seemingly named Ranboo had responded.

"Well we're going to have to." Phil responded strictly, "Obviously we've gotten no where trying to sneak around being nice."

"W-why don't we just take all the stuff in the vault and go? We ain't gotta hurt anyone." Ranboo has asked innocently, but immediately regret it when he saw Phil go mad.

"Look at us right now, dumb kid," Phil raged, "we triggered the stupid alarm because of you, and now we're stuck in this guy's driveway. We're criminals, not school kids. Now toughen up, or boss will make you."

Ranboo had nodded in agreement, and the van had simultaneously finally started. They drove away quickly.

Dream's eyes widened. "No." He said, "No no no."

He ran back in the house, where the alarm had finally ceased it's yells, "No."

Dream remembered something. A core memory he thought he had pushed to the back of his head.

His mother kept all her valuables stashed inside a vault in the wall when he lived there. Maybe tens of thousands of dollars worth of stuff. Something even his father did not know about. His mother had died before she could retrieve the stuff.

Dream suddenly realized what the man Phil had said about hurting people, "We're going to have to."

George was in danger.

He tried to run to Wilbur's house, maybe George was there, but he suddenly was-

back in the white, empty replica neighborhood of the afterlife. He tried closing his eyes over and over again, touching the handprint, touching anything, but nothing would bring him back to the living world.

movement

Dream had told Sapnap everything that had happened the next day, and Sapnap tried to help as much as he could. He had been helping Dream try to re-enter the living world to at least learn more, but communication with the living was impossible.

He had gotten a few seconds of breaking the barrier, but it was abrupt and he would be sent back to the world of the dead after.

They had tried different locations. Wilbur's house, Dream's old school, and even Disney World, but nothing came from it other than nothing more than a few seconds to a minute at most. Nothing as long as when he was in George's home.

"Nothing." Dream groaned, "Nothing. Nothing. Nothing." He was punching at the pavement, and Sapnap knelt down next to him.

Sapnap was silent for a while, "What were you thinking of before you got into the real world in Wrong Number's house?" He asked.

"I wasn't thinking of anything, I just-" Dream tried to remember, "I touched the wall. It was a special wall. I was just thinking of how sorry I was, I guess and how I wish I hadn't been so vague and how I-" Dream began but suddenly came to a realization.

"What is it?" Sapnap questioned, and Dream started to stand, helping Sapnap up as well.

"How I wanted to go back." Dream explained, but Sapnap was still obviously confused.

"Hm?"

"Remember," Dream said excitedly, "how when you visited Darryl's house you were thinking about how having fun again and being alive was the reason you wanted to go back."

"Yes, and?" Sapnap raised his left eyebrow.

"and I was thinking about how I wanted to apologize to George. How that was why I would have wanted to go back. To be alive again." Dream grinned. "Will you go with me to city hall?"

"What the heck do you need to go to city hall for?"

"This is what you needed to be here for?" Sapnap asked in a bored tone, tilting his head at the sight in front of him.

They were standing in front of a statue commemorating Schlatt, the governor who had died in 1970.

The statue was visible for both of them, seemingly because it was considered a place rather than an object. It was usually ignored, or being climbed on by little kids. Someone had even drawn a unibrow on the statue in 1972, leading to a fence being built around it.

Dream walked over to the plaque reading "Governor Schlatt" along with the date he had died and some facts about him.

"I thought we hated this guy. 'Worst government official' remember?" Sapnap told him, "Why are we here?"

Dream tapped at the plaque, "The date. The date he died."

"What about it?" Sapnap questioned, reading the plaque and turning to Dream for answers.

"It's the date I met someone very important." Dream explained as he closed his eyes. He remembered that day.

He had learned of Schlatt's death through a newspaper, and he had planned to call Sapnap to ask him if he had learned the news.

Instead, the phone redirected somewhere else. He had called the

"Wrong number." Dream whispered out loud, and suddenly

Muffled talking filled his ears. He opened his eyes, and once again the world had been colorful and vibrant. There were children riding on bikes around the sidewalk of City Hall, and a pair of teenagers trying to throw a hat at the Schlatt statue to see who could get it on his head first.

Dream smiled, he had done it again. It felt like he would have a significant time there, but not nearly enough. He ran over to the exit, trying to get out of the area and to George's neighborhood. He had been sprinting, and had reached the road.

As he was about to cross, he had hit an invisible border. Confused, he knocked at it and banged on it, trying to get past it, but it seemed tough. He couldn't leave the area of city hall.

"Yeah, you're not gettin' through that." A voice behind him spoke, and Dream turned to see who it was.

Behind him too Schlatt. Rather, the ghost of Schlatt. He was flipping a coin repeatedly in his hand. It was a coin from 2021. A coin from the real world.

"Governor Schlatt?" Dream walked toward him, "You're a ghost?"

Schlatt rolled his eyes, "Sounds so childish. I'm just dead, kid."

"Right... dead." Dream said slowly, "You can get to this world too?"

Schlatt rolled his eyes, "I do it more than I want to." He explained, "Hint: I don't want to at all. I've been doing it for fifty one years, it's so annoying."

Dream only knew Schlatt from the news when he had added some ridiculous rule to the city that was unfair and corrupt, but now that he was speaking to him, he had loathed him even more.

"How do you do it?" Dream had hesitantly asked. As much as he did not want to converse with the man, he knew he had to get something.

"Haven't you been listening?" Schlatt said rudely, "I don't do this on purpose. I don't like being here. I spend every day wishing I could go back just to kick all these new government rookies out and show them how to do it my way. The right way." He had flipped the coin in front of Dream's face with an evil grin.

Dream's theory was right. If you longed to go back to the real world enough, you would. Schlatt just didn't know he was the one putting himself there.

The coin glistened in the sun, which put another question in Dream's mind. Bravely, he spoke again, "How did you get that?"

Schlatt sighed in annoyance, "What, kid?"

"The coin. It's from this world." Dream indicated the round gold coin between Schlatt's fingers.

"Obviously." Schlatt said, "I nicked it from the new governor's office. Never liked that guy."

"Callahan?" Dream asked, "You hate Callahan?"

"I hate everyone that's not me." Schlatt said plainly. This guy was a new level of full of himself. "But yeah, I stole it."

"How? Ghos- Dead people can't touch anything." Dream wanted to get as much information as possible. "We can't open doors either."

"Huh?" Schlatt asked, "I do that crap all the time."

"Can you show me how?" Dream asked impulsively, "To- to do that."

Schlatt gave in, mostly answering so he could get Dream out of his hair, "You hate the world enough, you can mess with it." He threw the coin toward Dream, who tried to catch it, but it went right through his hand. "Do you hate anything here?" Schlatt picked up the coin before it fell to the floor.

Dream tilted his head and squinted his eyes a bit at Schlatt.

"You hate me, don't you." Schlatt answered for him plainly, "Go like, kick my statue or something. You can hop the fence, not like the cops can see you. See if you can crack it."

"You're giving me permission to break your statue?" Dream made sure, and Schlatt shrugged.

"They got my beard wrong. What a disgrace to me." Schlatt shook his head at the statue in the distance. "Good luck, kid." He said as Dream walked away. There was still sting in his voice, but much less of it.

Dream walked over to the statue, hopping the small fence around it. One of the teenagers throwing the hat at the statue had thrown it bullseye at his chest, but it had gone straight through him.

Dream laughed and took a deep breath. "Okay."

He took one swing at the statue, and his hand went straight through it. He groaned and kept swinging, thinking of all the annoying restrictions Schlatt had put on the city in 1968. He swung and swung but nothing cracked. It hadn't even been solid.

He did this for fifteen more minutes, and he saw the real Schlatt watching him from across the grassy area, laughing at him.

"Oh shut up." Dream muttered to himself.

If he was alive, the bones on his hand would have been broken into millions of pieces already. He was lucky he felt no pain. He had crouched down by the statue, and given up.

He looked at everyone in the living world, watching the children play and the adults walk around the small park around it.

His eyes circled the field, until he saw something.

George.

He was with Tommy, showing him how to play some kind of video game on his cellphone.

Dream walked over to them mindlessly. Neither of his sons were there, so he assumed George was babysitting or had just taken Tommy outside to play.

"Good one George." Dream laughed to himself, "Take the kid outside just to make him play video games."

He had not seen George since the day he had died. He had not had time to study his face, or to see how accurate his drawing of him was.

He walked closer and sat down beside them, watching him.

"Oh!" Tommy yelled, "I got him! I got him!" Tommy yelled at the game on his phone. George and him celebrated the victory by high fiving.

"My turn, Tom." George told Tommy, who handed him the phone, "I can totally beat him faster than you."

"No. If you don't beat him faster than me, you owe me an ice cream." Tommy offered hopefully.

"It's on." George accepted the challenge.

George expertly tapped the buttons on the phone, sending attacks to whatever the game was. Dream still had the mind of an old man, so he did not understand what the heck the game was.

Instead, he focused on George. He just stared at him. At the man he used to love.

He watched George's hands, the same hands that had made the green handprint on the wall of his house when they had called each other.

"Oh, Georgie." Dream whispered, as he reached for George's hand.

Suddenly the phone had flew out of George's fingers. "Tommy!" George said, "That's cheating!"

"What?" Tommy said, bewildered, "What did I do?"

"You hit the phone out of my hand! You're not getting ice cream for that." George said jokingly.

"Did not!" Tommy defended himself, "My hands were right here!"

"Mhm, sure." George said skeptically as he picked the phone back up and looked at the screen, "See! I lost because of that!"

"I didn't do it! I swear on Isabelle from Animal Crossing!" Tommy almost cried, "You owe me ice cream now."

"Alright. Let's go, Tommy." He helped Tommy up from the grass as they walked over to the ice cream stand in the corner of the park. "That wasn't fair though." George kept joking, and the two

continued to argue over it as they walked.

Dream tried to follow, but the ice cream stand was past the barrier he couldn't cross. He groaned in frustration as he banged on the barrier once more.

Schlatt walked up to him after a while, "Good job."

"What?" Dream turned to look at him in confusion

"You did it." Schlatt said as he flipped the coin in Dream's face one more time, "You moved something."

the medium

Dream had continuously shifted worlds more throughout the past week, and had become more proud of himself. Though the time spent in the living world had been short and unmeaningful, he was glad he had some sort of real connection with the world he had lived and loved in.

The constant worries about George plagued him every second of every day, but his constant attempts to shift into George's house again had proved to be failures. He wanted so badly to go back and make sure he was safe, but it had not been enough.

Now Dream sit in the replica of town square, in front of his old bookshop that he had passed down to his son Dave. He wanted to get a glimpse of how his son had been doing, so he sat there for a while trying to get into the world.

It took a few tries, but eventually he had successfully entered the real town square. His body felt the warmth of the vibrant colors that the afterlife had needed but didn't have. It was still a feeling he could not describe. He almost felt alive again.

The door to the bookstore had been closed, causing Dream to groan. He was still not strong enough to open doors, and had to wait until someone would enter the store to be able to walk in.

The store had been in a hidden location that not many people would find, and only customers who regularly shopped there would be constant visitors. The location was the cheapest property, which came with benefits but also lacked the ability to attract attention.

When it proved that waiting would not get him anywhere and his time would be running out, he decided he should walk around. It had been a while since he had entered the small town square, it was a childhood memory he had always kept at the back of his head. Getting ice cream at Florean Fortescue's, the tea store that always gave free samples, and the-

"Medium." Dream's eyes widened as he came to a realization.

As a child, him and Sappnap would go to Town Square and leave their parents to sight-see on their own.

As a result, they came to some weird shops that their parents would not let them go into. Like the butcher shop who's window clearly showed the horrors inside, or the very adult stores that were hidden in plain sight.

One place in particular was one that Sappnap and Dream had frequented was an apparent Medium who could seemingly speak to the dead. They would always dare each other to go inside, or call out the names of ghosts, but both were always scared to do either.

They had learned what a Medium was, and had asked their parents if they could go inside, but were always denied permission.

"Those are just scams, Clay." Dream's mother always told him, "Old bats trying to manipulate you for your money."

Since then, they had stopped going to the store knowing it was fake, but Dream, now dead and desperate, would try anything at this point.

He ran past and through people (a benefit of being a ghost), to the Medium, hoping it would still be

there.

Indeed the store still stood, with a small sign that said "I can speak to your long lost love ones." and a larger one beneath it that said "Only \$80 per half hourly sessions."

Dream raised his eyebrows. It was quite a high price for just half an hour, which pushed his mother's theory that it was a scam for money. Nonetheless, Dream walked inside, since the door had (thankfully) always been open.

Inside, he saw a man sitting at the table across from a young woman who was in tears. He had his hand on top of hers as he spoke, "and your husband wants you to know that he loves you very much, and how he misses spending Christmas with you."

The woman sniffled, "He was Jewish, he never celebrated Christmas." She started to turn skeptical, but the man tried to save himself.

"Perhaps I misheard," The so-called Medium had corrected, "I believe he said Hanukkah."

When he said that, the young woman had started sobbing again, "Tell him I love him, and so do the kids."

The man nodded and turned to his left with his eyes closed, creating the effect that he was talking to someone who wasn't there, "Your wife Cynthia loves you, and so do your children."

Dream raised his eyebrow, surely if he was talking to another ghost, Dream would have seen. He almost sniggered at how fake the whole act was, but felt bad for the woman who had paid good money thinking she could communicate with her husband.

"Thank you, Charlie." The woman named Cynthia thanked the Medium, "I am oh so thankful that I have gotten closure."

The Medium named Charlie nodded before patting her hand, "It is my pleasure," he smiled, "now if we make our way over to the counter, you will be able to make your payment."

Dream scoffed, this man was the biggest scammer to ever have lived in Florida. He wondered how many people he had fooled with this ridiculous act.

He watched the woman pay Charlie without hesitation, before thanking him in tears once more and walking out of the store.

Charlie peeked to see that she was out the door, before sitting on the waiting room sofa and counting the money, "Oh, what a haul." He said, hugging the money to his chest with a smile.

Dream scoffed again, "This guy is such a con artist." He said out loud.

Charlie's eyes widened, jumping up from the sofa, "Who said that?" He said, "We're closed for lunch break right now, come back later."

Dream suddenly became excited, is it possible the man could hear him?

"I said," Dream said louder, "you're such a con artist."

Charlie turned angry, "Show yourself if you shall insult my passed down for generations talent." He looked around the room wildly, waiting for a person to show up.

"Is it passed down for generations? Or did you get it from acting school?" Dream challenged as he

walked closer to Charlie.

Charlie suddenly turned scared, "Where are you?"

"On your right." Dream said before moving to his left, "Now I'm on your left."

Dream passed his hand through the man and Charlie shivered, "Stop jesting me, show yourself." He bellowed.

"I am." Dream said, "See, I just put my hand through you." He did it again, causing Charlie to shiver once more.

Charlie's eyes widened, "Are yo- could you be a-"

"Ghost?" Dream chuckled, "Why so surprised? I thought seeing people like me was your job."

"O-of course it is." Charlie nodded slowly, "Oh God. My mother could see ghosts. She did pass the talent down to me. Oh God I can actually- I mean yes, of course I frequently get visited by spirits such as you." He cleared his throat.

"Mhm." Dream laughed, "My name is Clay and I need your help."

"And why should I help you?" Charlie suddenly turned brave, but Dream was ready for that.

"Oh you don't have to," Dream began, "I'll just have to follow you everywhere you go, watch over you every second of everyday, haunt your sleeping quarters, order the demon under your bed to pull at your fee-"

"Alright!" Charlie put his hands up in surrender, "Only if you prove to me that you are indeed a spirit and this is not some wacky experiment to try and get me to admit I've been scamming people."

"So you are scamming people."

Charlie was silent for a moment, "Listen whoever you are, I've been down bad. This is the only thing I've got left going for me so I'd appreciate if you kept this quiet."

"Well," Dream said, "as a dead person who could I tell, anyway?"

"Good point." Charlie sighed, "Now please can we get whatever you need over it so you can leave me alone."

"Can you see me?" Dream asked curiously even though he already knew the answer.

"No, I cannot see you." Charlie said, "Now you said your name was Clay-"

He suddenly screamed after he said the name.

Dream raised a brow, "What? What is it?"

Charlie walked closer to him before waving his hand inside Dream's body and jumping back, "You- you-"

"You can see me now?"

"Yes I-" Charlie was getting lightheaded.

"Oh jeebers," Dream rolled his eyes, "Don't faint on me now, I need you."

"Alright, alright." Charlie breathed slowly, "What do you need?"

Dream smiled in triumph, "I need you to write down this address."

George sit on his couch eating an ice cream and staring at the blank wall ahead. It had been the time when Dream would used to call, but now he had nothing to wait for.

His pants were stained with the residue of mud from sitting by the flowers and taking care of them, just like he had promised.

Thinking about all of it, he wanted to cry again, but felt he had used up all his tears.

He was about to drift off to sleep when his doorbell rang. He knew Wilbur was at work, so he didn't know who it would be.

He opened the door and saw an unfamiliar man, "Er- Hello?"

The man smiled at him awkwardly, "Hello. May. I. Come. In. And. Talk?" He said in a broken sentence.

"Who are you?" George had his hand on the door knob, ready to close it in case it was a dangerous person.

"My name is Charlie and I have come to- to-" Charlie tilted his head, "talk."

"About what, exactly?" George looked suspicious.

Charlie turned to his left, having a whisper conversation to seemingly himself. "I have come to talk to you about Clay Soot."

George flinched at the name, his eyes downcast, "And why would you want to do that?"

"I have spoken to him." Charlie answered slowly and unsure.

"So have I." George said plainly, "Now why do you want to speak to me about him?"

"He is a ghost and he told me he needed to tell you that you are in danger." Charlie spoke with haste, and after realizing what he had just said, put his face in his palm.

George had had enough at that point, and started shutting the door when something stopped it from closing. It had not been Charlie, since he had seen his hands.

"Please, sir." George said, "I do have to go."

"So do I, but this particular spirit is very persistent." Charlie groaned to his left, "Please, let me talk."

"I do not wish to speak about him right now," George said one last time, "now if you'll excuse me."

Charlie suddenly was the one to stop the door from shutting, "Wait! Wrong number!"

George stopped in his tracks, "W-what?"

"He said to call you wrong number and- what?" Charlie turned to his left again, "I don't know what that mean- fine." He turned to George again, "And there's lime green hand prints on your wall. He made them in 1972- oh okay oops, I mean 1970, and you made yours in 2020 and- I don't know he's- STOP YELLING AT ME I'M TRYING, CLAY."

George started backing away quickly in fear, about to kick the door shut.

"Flowers!" Charlie said suddenly, "He gave you flowers. They're calendulas and you have them planted outside."

"Anyone can find that out."

Charlie started whispering madly to his left again, "That's so- fine." Charlie looked at George, "You once peed your pants at a chess match against a girl you had a crush on in fourth year."

George's jaw dropped slightly. He had only told one person that story, but he was not ready to believe it so quickly.

"What was her name?"

Charlie turned to his left and whispered, "He asks so many questions, dear God." He told the imaginary figure that was apparently next to him. He turned to George again, "Her name was Andrea."

George bravely walked closer, slowly but surely. "D-dream?"

Charlie met George's eye, "He said his name isn't Dream." He said, "He said his name is 'old man'"

the card

Chapter Notes

If you didn't know, Charlie is Slimcicle on youtube teehee

The tension in the room was unimaginable as Charlie sit on the sofa with an awkward smile. He could tell there was still a trace of reluctance within George's plastered belief.

Charlie cleared his throat, "So uh," he noticed George didn't look up but continued talking, "how do you two know each other?"

George shut his eyes for a moment, his stomach slowly churning. A bit of his skepticism had faded when he remembered he had once experienced strange occurrences in the past.

Compared to the telephone calls of last year, ghosts didn't seem like all that much of a big deal.

"Where is he?" George managed to ask after the long silence following Charlie's question.

George's followed Charlie's eyes, which slowly traced across the room before reaching the spot next to George on the couch. "Right next to you."

George flinched a bit and shivered at the cold. His throat started shaking as he attempted to control the memories rushing back to his head. Tears started to form in his eyes.

Charlie's eyes widened, "He said 'don't cry.'" Charlie tried to comfort the young man, but it was proving no use.

George turned to his left.

"Other side." Charlie corrected him.

"Oh." George said as he turned to his right, "I don't really know um- what to say to you, Dream." He spoke to a seemingly empty spot on the couch.

"He said you don't have to say anything at all," Charlie told him, "and that you probably shouldn't say anything since there's a nosy eavesdropper- Hey! I'm not eavesdropping, I don't have a choice but to hear what you say." Charlie apparently argued with the spirit.

George almost smiled. All those years and a death, and Dream was still possessed the humor he once loved best. Almost smiled.

"I will say, there will never truly be privacy," Charlie said unfortunately, "I'm your only means of communication, I'm afraid."

George nodded slowly in understanding, "I don't know how any of this works."

"Me neither." Charlie admitted and George gave a look of confusion.

"I thought 'talking to ghosts' was your job." George questioned and Charlie shifted in his seat.

"Well, it is but- *you shut up*." He seemingly scolded at Dream, "He's laughing at me. He must be the sassiest dead person that exists."

"Sounds like him." George chuckled a bit. He had more composure than he did earlier.

"He asked what that's supposed to mean." Charlie carried the message to George, who only smiled a tiny smile in response.

"He knows what I mean."

"This all must be very shocking and hard to stomach for you." Charlie told George, who nodded with a small breath of a laugh.

"No kidding." George relaxed in his seat, "But I've been through weirder things."

"What could be weirder than this?" Charlie locked his eyes on where Dream sat and gave him a cold stare.

George now fully grinned, "You don't even know."

Charlie's eyes shifted from Dream to George, "I'm guessing this is an inside joke that I'm not a part of, given the fact that Clay found what you just said to be funny."

George's heart started to ache again with the bittersweet knowledge that he still had the ability to make Dream laugh.

"What's so important that's upstairs?" Charlie asked.

"Hm?" George looked at him in confusion.

"Well this *very persistent* spirit seems to want to go upstairs, but if he strays too far from me he'll shift back to his world and can't go up there without me." Charlie explained, as he made a mocking face to Dream.

"That's just my bedroom." George answered, "But I know why he wants to go." George said as his voice slightly cracked.

Charlie spoke, "Am I allowed to go?" He asked George, "He's practically begging me to, please I can't take him anymore."

George shut his eyes for a brief moment before nodding hesitantly, "I assume so." He agreed as he got up from his spot on the sofa, and led Charlie upstairs.

Charlie smiled, rolled his eyes at Dream, and followed George up the carpeted steps to his room.

He was met with the sight of vintage flowery wallpaper, scattered clothes on the floor, and some paint on the walls.

Charlie indicated at the hand-prints on the wall, "This some sort of art project?" He asked jokingly.

"Sure." George said. It had just occurred to him that this was the first time he and Dream had ever been together in the room they had spent so much time communicating with each other in. The thought slowly broke him inside.

"Now he's trying to kick me out." Charlie looked offended, "You know, you expect so much from me, Clay, but you don't seem all that appreciative."

"I thought he couldn't stray that far from you." George brought up, and Charlie agreed.

"He's telling me to wait outside the door." He relayed, "I don't know what that's going to do. You can't communicate without me, but whatever you say." He threw his hands up, walked out the door and shut it.

George felt awkward and a bit nervous now. He was apparently alone with Dream now.

He sat on the bed and rapidly shook his leg on the floor, and, after assuming Dream could hear him, he spoke, "You see over there?" He pointed to his left at the telephone with the cord cut in two, "That's what you did."

George waited a bit before talking again, "I don't blame you. I get why you did it but your timing was just awful."

"I know." Dream spoke softly. George couldn't hear him, but all he wanted to do was explain.

He stared at the telephone cord and replayed what George had just said.

"That's what you did."

That is what he did. He unknowingly broke George twice, and there was nothing he was more sorry for than that.

George started to speak again, and Dream turned to him, "I wish I had known the whole time that Wilbur was your son. Then I'd have known you had ended up moving on." He sighed deeply as he tried to contain tears, "Saved me all the hurt."

Dream still continued to reply even though he was speaking to no one, "I admit I could have gone about that better." He himself started to feel ache.

"You could have gone about that better." George said at the same time, and Dream was taken by surprise.

He thought George had heard him, but no. They just still possessed the ability to somehow know what the other person is going to say. The way a soulmate would.

Dream walked around the room, studying it closer. The light had been on this time and he could see it better.

The photo frame on George's table was still facing the other way, and he wished he could see what it was but unfortunately couldn't.

Beside it lay the quartz that Dream had given him through the time capsule. He felt the ache even more, and the appreciation for George choosing to keep it.

He explored the room even more, before stumbling upon a card on the floor. The baseball card he had also given to George using the time capsule. He smiled as he made to pick it up, but forgot he couldn't.

He instead flicked it in frustration, and heard George gasp.

The card had flung across the floor, and George followed it with his eyes.

Dream's eyes widened, he ran to where the card went and tried to pick it up. He closed his eyes, expecting nothing but found himself with the card in between his fingers.

"Dream?" George suddenly found his posture again, almost backing away from the levitating card. It fell again, as Dream didn't know how to properly hold objects yet, but he could move them the tiniest bit.

George stared at the card that fell on the floor after seemingly being picked up by the air. He walked closer to it.

The card was on the floor, but it was sliding slowly across it as if being whiffed by a gush of invisible air.

George followed it with his eyes as the card reach the wall, slowly being pushed up and trailing it's way on the flowery wallpaper.

George tried to make out what Dream was trying to do, so he continued following the card until the card reached the end of the flowery wallpaper and the beginning of a lime green spot on the wall.

The hand prints.

After the card reached the hand prints, it fell to the floor. Dream had led him where he wanted George to look. It was clever. George impulsively put his hand on the hand print, and instead of the usual nothingness he felt when he did it, this time the area felt cold.

Dream had his hand on the hand print George had made, and watched as George had his hand on the one he made.

The hand prints were once made with the separation of time, and now they were together, but with the separation of death.

This was the closest they were ever going to get.

the girl

Chapter Notes

small filler chapter :] bigger, more plot-centered chapters coming soon

Charlie sat impatiently on George's red sofa, "So I think now you should tell him why you're really here." He told Clay.

"Last time I checked, he can't hear me." Clay retorted smartly.

Charlie rolled his eyes, "Alright, alright." He put his hands up in surrender, "George." He called.

George looked up from the couch, his hands fidgeting.

"...Vault of valuables?" George asked.

"Yes, and we don't have physical proof of who threatened you, but we think you should keep yourself safe by not staying home this week or installing extra security so you at least catch who it is." Charlie explained in a very straightforward manner.

"Are you sure that's what they're after?"

Charlie turned to his side, where Dream seemingly was, "...Well he says he can't prove that that's why, but he's almost certain." He replied to George, who nodded in slight understanding.

"But the area where you said the vault was," George said skeptically, "it was filled in during a small renovation. I checked again and there's no way there's a hollow space where it could be."

Charlie looked confused, "Are you certain?"

George nodded, "Trust me, there's nothing there they should be after."

Charlie understood, not wanting to intrude any longer. He didn't even want any part of this.

"So that's why my phone got notified that my security system was tripped." George finally spoke again, unlocking his phone and showing Charlie the alarm history.

Charlie took the phone from him, "And was there any footage?"

"No." George answered with a disappointed tone, "The feed cuts out when they're about to walk into the camera's view."

Charlie nodded and turned to where Dream was, "Clay here says maybe you should stay at a friend's house. He overheard the intruders threaten you, and that it's probably the safest."

George thought about it for a moment, "I suppose so. Calling the police when I have no concrete evidence wouldn't do anything for now. I guess I can stay at," he looked shyly over to Dream, "Wilbur's."

Charlie grinned an awkward grin, "Oh well now that that's figured out, I best be goin-" he suddenly shivered, "what do you want?" He scolded the air beside him.

George watched Charlie communicate with Dream and was still in awe at how such a phenomenon could happen.

Charlie turned to George, "He said 'I'm sorry' and," He turned back to Dream and again to George, "goodnight, Wrong Number." Charlie informed, unaware of what the significance of those three words were.

George was silent for a few seconds, leaving an uncomfortably awkward atmosphere. When he finally did look up, though, his eyes cut to where he assumed Dream stood.

"Goodnight, Old Man."

Maybe time did go on slowly, and maybe the hurt that formed between the two had started to ease, but there was no denying that what was once there would never, truly, go away.

"Do you have to keep following me around?" Charlie said with an annoyed tone to Clay, who was walking beside him in town square.

Clay nodded, "I get bored and I can't control when I can go back to the dead people world."

Charlie repeated the words 'dead people world' under his breath a couple times before rolling his eyes, "I'm going home."

Clay tilted his head, "Home?" He asked, "You live in town square?"

Charlie sighed, "I'm tight on money, I live where I work." He indicated north, where the direction of his workplace was.

"So that's why you're scamming people?" Clay raised a brow, "So you can afford an apartment?"

Charlie muttered under his breath before answering, "Don't say it like that. It makes me sound like a bad guy."

"You don't think what you do is bad?" Clay asked.

"Of course I think what I do is bad," Charlie admitted, "you think I don't think about this a lot? How I'm taking advantage of people who think they're talking to their dead loved ones?"

"Well I'd call you an emotionless psycho if you didn't feel at least a little bit guilty," Clay leveled with him, "why don't you get another job, then?"

Charlie shrugged, "I tried, no one wants me."

A silence followed his answer as the two continued to walk down town square, Charlie quieting down and avoiding conversation with Dream whenever they walked past another person.

Clay caught sight of a door sandwiched between two larger buildings. He recognized it immediately, "Hey Charlie."

Charlie turned toward him, "Yeah, Casper?"

Clay rolled his eyes, "Can we go in there?" He pointed to the door, and Charlie was about to protest but gave him a chance and walked inside.

Charlie took in the smell. It smelled natural and fresh and overwhelming at first, but soon he found a sort of peace and serenity in it.

"What is this place?" Charlie asked Dream, before he was approached by a man.

"Hello there!" The old man greeted, "You don't know where you are? I could have sworn my daughter fixed the sign outside." The man answered, seemingly thinking that Charlie was talking to him.

Charlie was taken aback by the enthusiasm the man held, "Sorry. Is a florist?"

The man nodded quickly, "Yes!" He replied, "But we sell other things too. Is there anything you need?"

Charlie turned to Dream for an answer, but Dream was all the way on the other side of the store looking through the seed drawers, "Nothing at the moment, just wanted to look around."

The old man grinned, "Okay! Well I'm here if you need anything. My name's Karl."

Charlie gave him a thumbs up before running over to where Dream was and whispering wildly, "What are we doing here?"

Dream held up a finger to shush him, but Charlie scoffed and continued talking.

"There's no one even shopping here."

Dream raised a brow, "Yes there is. That lady right there." He indicated to his left, who was admiring a row of newly potted orchids.

"Where?" Charlie asked, following where Dream had pointed.

To Dream's shock, Charlie had walked through the girl. Dream saw him visibly shiver for a bit.

She was also a ghost.

"Oh!" She yelped, "Well I suppose that happens quite a bit, doesn't it?" She asked Dream, who didn't realize she was talking to him.

"Who are you?" Dream asked her, and she kindly smiled.

"No one special, I just come here occasionally." She answered, before looking to Charlie, "He's alive?"

"Yes. He's a medium." Clay explained, and her eyes lit up.

"He is?" She said suddenly, "And you can talk to him?"

Clay nodded, "I can. And he can see me but for some reason he can't see you."

She indicated understanding, and before she could ask anything else Clay beat her to it.

"So why do you come here?" He asked, and the kind, warm smile returned to her face.

"I just admire the flowers here." She answered, "They're quite pretty to be around."

"Apologies for this, but aren't there other places to see flowers?" Clay asked, and she laughed a little.

"These are just special." She tilted her head before running her hand over a rose, "I couldn't appreciate them enough when I was alive so I'm appreciating them now."

Clay knew what she meant by wanting to appreciate flowers. Oh so long ago in 1970 they had become some of the most important things to him.

He watched her gently touch the roses, wondering why she wanted to be so near them, "And why couldn't you?"

The young lady laughed melodically, "This is going to sound ridiculous but," she leaned closer to him, "I was allergic."

End Notes

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